



The Great Mirror of Korea

Rethinking Modernity Through Korean Language, Politics, Society and Culture

By Christophe Gaudin

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Presents Korea as a distinctive “mirror of modernity,” showing how its capacity to absorb and transform foreign models has shaped its capitalism, democracy, and remarkable global cultural influence.

Why did Korea dream the West so successfully that the West now dreams of Korea? Drawing on twenty years of lived experience, the book combines historical analysis with philosophy and popular culture.

Key selling points

- A bold, original thesis: argues that Korea, not Japan or China, is the true mirror of Western modernity, having absorbed and redirected its forms with unmatched intensity, offering a fresh framework for understanding both Korea and global capitalism itself.
- Timely and headline-driven: engages directly with recent events, including the Sewol ferry disaster, the impeachments of Park Geun-hye and Yoon Suk-yeol, the 2024 martial law crisis, Korea's pandemic response, and the global rise of K-pop and Squid Game.
- Rigorous yet accessible: combines close linguistic analysis of Korean grammar, deep historical research, and vivid firsthand observation from the author's years living and teaching in Seoul, moving fluidly between Confucius, Nietzsche, and contemporary Korean pop culture.
- Broad crossover appeal: speaks to readers of East Asian history and politics, students of comparative linguistics and philosophy, and the vast international audience drawn to Korean film, music, and literature.

About the Author(s) / Editor(s)

Christophe Gaudin has lived in Korea since 2007. He is an Assistant Professor of Political Science at Kookmin University in Seoul.

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